

***Remarks***

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-27, 29, and 31-49 are pending in the application, with claims 1, 19, and 22 being the independent claims. Claims 28 and 30 are sought to be cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter therein. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Based on the above Amendment and the following Remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

***Objection to the Specification***

The Examiner has asked that the reference numeral 36 be added to line 20, p. 14 of the specification. This amendment has been made as described above.

***Objection to the Drawings***

The Examiner has asked that FIGs. 8a and 8b be corrected by replacing reference label 4b with 41b. A replacement drawing sheet that makes this correction is included herewith.

***Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102***

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-18, 29, 39 and 48 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,953,793 ("Roder"). Claim 1 is an independent claim; the others depend from claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended to state that the support element is essentially empty and is pneumatically connected to the pressure elements. This is shown in FIG. 6 of the application and described in para. 0026, pp. 12-13 of the specification. These features are not disclosed by Roder. Rather, Roder discloses a compressed air conduit within a support element (Roder, FIG. 5). Hence the support element of Roder is not empty. Nor does the support element serve as a pneumatic connection between pressure elements in Roder. Rather, the compressed air in Roder passes through the conduit that lies within the support element. For at least these reasons, therefore, claim 1 as amended is not anticipated by Roder.

Because claims 2-18, 29, 39 and 48 depend from amended claim 1, these claims necessarily include all features of claim 1. Given that Roder fails to disclose all features of claim 1, this reference also fails to disclose all features of any of these dependent claims. For at least this reason, none of claims 2-18, 29, 39 and 48 are anticipated by Roder.

The Examiner has also rejected claim 28 as being anticipated by Roder. This claim has been cancelled.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 19-21 as being anticipated by Roder. Independent claim 19 has been amended to state that the support element is essentially empty and is pneumatically connected to the pressure elements. Again, this is shown in FIG. 6 of the application

and described in para. 0026, pp. 12-13 of the specification. These features are not disclosed by Roder. Hence amended claim 19 is not anticipated by Roder. Given that Roder fails to disclose all features of claim 19 as amended, this reference also fails to disclose all features of either claims 20 or 21, which depend from claim 19. For at least this reason, neither of claims 20 or 21 are anticipated by Roder.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 22, 26, 27, and 31-38 as being anticipated by Roder. Claim 22 has been amended to become an independent claim. Claims 26, 27, and 31-38 depend from amended claim 22. Moreover, claim 22 has been amended to include the feature of a channel that is open on one side and is closable with a removable lid. This is illustrated in FIG. 7a and described in para. 0030, pp. 14-15 of the specification. Roder does not disclose a support element having such a channel with such a lid. Claim 22 as amended is therefore not anticipated by Roder. Given that Roder fails to disclose all features of claim 22 as amended, this reference also fails to disclose all features any of claims 26, 27, and 31-38, which depend from claim 22. For at least this reason, none claims 26, 27, and 31-38 are anticipated by Roder.

***Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103***

The Examiner has rejected claims 23-25, arguing that these claims are obvious over Roder in view of U.S. Patent 6,134,752 ("Gohler"). These claims depend from amended claim 22, which now includes the feature of a channel that is open on one side and is closable with a removable lid. This is illustrated in FIG. 7a and described in para. 0030, pp. 14-15 of the specification. This feature is

necessarily included in dependent claims 23-25. This feature is not disclosed by either Roder or Gohler, however. Hence, none of claims 23-25 is rendered obvious by Roder or Gohler, alone or in combination.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 40-43, arguing that these claims are obvious over Roder. These claims depend from independent claim 1, which has been amended to state that the support element is essentially empty and pneumatically connected to the pressure elements. Again, this is shown in FIG. 6 of the application and described in para. 0026, pp. 12-13 of the specification.

These features are not disclosed or suggested by Roder. Because claims 40-43 depend from amended claim 1, these claims necessarily include all features of claim 1. Given that Roder fails to disclose or suggest all features of claim 1, this reference fails to render claims 40-43 obvious.

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Appl. No. 10/627,988

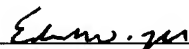
### *Conclusion*

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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***In the Drawings:***

Pursuant to the Examiner's comments regarding FIGs. 8a and 8b, a corrected drawing sheet is included herewith, labeled "Replacement Sheet" as required.